Diocese of Norwich
St Benet's
Multi Academy Trust

Acorn
PARTNERSHIP

Equality and Diversity Objectives Policy

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Approved By:	**Finance, Audit and Risk Committee**
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Person Responsible:	**Chief Executive Officer**

Our Christian Ethos and Values

Our academies are open to all and accepting of all regardless of faith. Our passion and ambition are to see children and young people in all our academies achieve excellent educational outcomes alongside developing and growing into their potential as individuals made in the image of God.

Our culture is one of high aspiration for all. This is rooted in our Christian values as demonstrated in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We have a desire to see our academies acknowledged as places of aspiration, high quality learning, achievement and hope making a significant contribution to the communities they serve.

All policies within St Benet's Multi Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as "the Trust"), whether relating to an individual academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our Christian ethos and values.

Overall accountabilities and roles

The Trust has overall accountability for all its academies and staff. Through a Scheme of Delegation it sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, its Executive Officers, the Local Governance Committee and the Headteacher. The Headteacher of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Trust.

All employees of the Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

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1. Aims

Our Trust aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Our Trust aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with our values:

Honesty
I have chosen the way of truth.
Psalms 119:30

Courage
Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9

Compassion
When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
Matthew 9:36

Hope
But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.
Romans 8:25

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on the Department for Education (DfE) advice for schools on the Equality Act, the technical guidance for schools from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and guidance from the Government Equalities Office on meeting the specific duties that support the public sector equality duty.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will:

- Ensure that the equality information as set out in this statement is published and communicated throughout the Trust, including to governors, staff, pupils and parents.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Executive Team.

3.2 The Equality Link Trustee

The Equality Link Trustee will:

- Meet with the CEO and other relevant staff members on an annual basis to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed
- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full Board of Trustees regarding any issues

3.3 The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils

3.4 All staff across the Trust

All staff across the trust are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in Appendix 1.

4. Eliminating discrimination

The Trust is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Trustees and all staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected by a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies)

5.1 Publishing information about pupils

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty the Trust will, for every school:

- Report at school level attainment data for each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the data referenced above to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our pupils

5.2 Publishing information about staff

In addition to the information about pupils, we will consider how our activities as an employer affect staff with protected characteristics. As a trust, we will publish information to show:

- The make-up of our workforce, with breakdowns of staff with different protected characteristics
- Gender pay-gap reporting and other pay equality issues

We will make sure that with any data we publish to show how we meet our equality duties, individual staff or pupils will not be identifiable. This means we may suppress some data if it relates to a very small number of staff or pupils to preserve their confidentiality.

6. Fostering good relations

The Trust aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of the curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Making sure schools work with their local community. This includes each school inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community

- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within each school. For example, school councils have representatives from different year groups and are formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in their schools' activities, such as sports clubs. Schools also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- Developing links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop how they implement their approach

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The Trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

In all our schools, we will always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for all pupils irrespective of their gender

The school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

8. Monitoring arrangements

The Trust will update the equality information we publish, described in section, at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by the CEO and approved by the Trust Board at least every 4 years.

9. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility Plan
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct
- SEND Policy

Appendix 1 – St Benet's Equality Objectives 2024-2028

1. We will undertake a detailed review of all data supporting the Equalities Policy and related policies and identify the core data for:
   a) The Trust
   b) Each academy
2. We will monitor each academy's performance data to ensure the most disadvantaged pupils are not further disadvantaged by actions taken to deal with the effects of Covid-19.
3. To take action to advance equality of opportunity and further move towards the eradication of prejudice-related bullying in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that there is an open culture of reporting and that every case is thoroughly investigated and restorative approaches used to bring about behaviour changes.
4. We will take action to ensure we are an employer of choice with an active recruitment policy to recruit from under-represented groups and develop our equality profile of all staff to help us understand and address key equality issues in our workforce.
5. To monitor levels of parental and pupil engagement (especially the most disadvantaged) in learning and school life, across all activities to ensure equity and fairness in access and engagement. And then to ensure all pupils are given similar opportunities with regards to enriching extracurricular activities.